BOOK REVIEW: SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: A STUDY OF ECONOMICS AS IF PEOPLE

MATTERED

Student's Name

Course

Professor's Name

Institutional Affiliation

City (State)

Date

Book Review: Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as If People Mattered

Introduction

Every artistic work has a worthwhile reason behind it, and a fundamental purpose for which it is meant to serve in the society. Some works are deceiving and immoral whereas some are constructive to the contemporary society. Notably, some publications dilate on specific concepts and theories related to certain domain. Different subjects are related in order to equip professionals fully with the necessary skills as in engineering and economics (Park 2016). Ernst Friedrich Schumacher authors the book *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* with an intention to analyze the world economy by considering the available resources, technological advancements, the gap between the rich and the poor, as well as the fundamentals of capitalism in an economy. In one way or another, the author's works relate to engineering aspects for international development in both a narrow and a wide perspective.

Motivation of the Author for Writing the Book

A closer look at the Schumacher's writings reveals his major motivation ranging from the most important to the least significant. Majorly, Schumacher is motivated by modernity and the current economic situation that was in those days. Reliable sources hold that the author was also motivated by his teacher's phrase that read *small is beautiful* which formed the title of his book. The fact that the author concentrates so much on modernity and its influence to the society, especially in India, confirms his motivation to writing the book in discussion. The publication of the book took place in 1973 when the world faced a serious energy crisis (Schumacher 1974). Therefore, the author seems to have been motivated by the 1973 energy crisis and globalization that took place at the time. The engineering domain relates enormously to energy as well as

energy sources, hence Schumacher's works are relevant to engineering professionals and may be eye opening in this career overtime.

<div align="center">**Succinct Outline of the Book**</div>

The book in question majorly focusses on the wellbeing of the society in both the Third World Nations and the Developed Nations. In essence, it gives various ideologies that can be helpful in the whole process of human survival in the planet. Problems to human progress can only be eliminated by finding potential solutions to them (Weeks 2012). In writing the book, Schumacher attempted to find solutions to various societal problems and international development. The title of the book, *A study of economics as if people mattered*, gives a true reflection of the book's content. Schumacher minds about the condition of humans in terms of what bothers the normalcy of their living hitherto relating to economic situation amongst other humanly related aspects. The author majorly concentrates on issues related to modern science, international technological development, and industrial production. Much of the mentioned aspects are elements of engineering for international development. Essentially, the book is divided in four major parts where part one addresses the world economy in relation to production methodologies, and part two concentrates on fundamental resources including land, technology, and nuclear energy. Last but to least, part three expounds on world system development with respect to wealth distribution, and part four is about capitalism and industrialization.

<div align="center">**Strengths and Weaknesses**</div>

Engineering for international development cannot be complete without a consideration of international economics, technological development, and economic growth. The three aspects are well analyzed in Schumacher's works; therefore, they mark the major strengths of his book in relation to engineering for international development. Additionally, Schumacher (1974) touches

on decentralization of large enterprises and the limited control that some individuals or nations have over them. Observably, this is a way of enhancing fairness in global development throughout the global economy. Importantly, international economics addresses key issues that influence international development including wealth distribution across the world and resources allocation to improve international development through availability of both human capital and other factors of production. For instance, engineers for international development are source of human capital and can serve in various international and local organizations in pursuance of numerous goals through specific engineering roles. Another strength of the Schumacher's book pertaining engineering for international development includes technological development. The author addresses the significance of utilizing appropriate technology for different nations depending on their affordability of a particular technology and adoptability of a specific technology. As Spitas, Spitas, and Rajabalinejad (2013) highlight, the world consists of diverse technological skills and ideas. Through engineering for international development, the third world countries should not hesitate to apply available technologies that will enable them run normally and maximize their profits whereas developed nations may apply advanced technologies to achieve their economic aid since they can afford them.

The author's aim of minimizing poverty and unemployment throughout the world translates to his strength. His insinuation is that engineering for international development is essential in pushing for global economic development overtime. Lastly, yet importantly, emphasis on the economic growth of the world is a notable strength as observed in the details of the book in discussion. Economic growth refers to an overtime production of a nation in terms of per capita income (Park 2016). Schumacher considers how countries can be productive and independent, which is a crucial issue in the world today. Furthermore, he notes that some of

energy solutions in the world are actually creation of other problems. For instance, the invention of nuclear energy led to the replacement of fossil fuels as sources of energy. Nuclear energy, however, causes excess pollution compared to fossil fuels. Clearly, economic growth and technological developments can as well have some drawbacks to international development (Schumacher 1974). Schumacher's work with respect to engineering for international development has more strengths than weaknesses. The book also over concentrates on the business realm in defining the world problems and successes even though sometimes this may not be the case.

Importance of the book for Engineering in International Development

Schumacher is more practical in his writing as he gives real life examples and applies some scientific and technical knowledge in finding solutions to the dominant societal problems. Modernity in relation to international development is at its best as described in various parts of the book. Development of nations through structural erections and organizational growth is an essential area in engineering for international development (Spitas, Spitas, & Rajabalinejad 2013). The author is consistent with the development of organizations throughout the nations as a way of allowing countries to grow in a relatively uniform manner. Development and engineering are two intertwined concepts that relate in big way in the manner Schumacher gives his descriptions. In addition, Schumacher suggestively connotes that the world can grow with implementation of technological developments in various areas as a way of embracing modernity. Improvement of human expertise is a way of assessing skilled labor. International development engineers, therefore, are sources of skilled labor in this context, hence the importance of the content of Schumacher's book.

Considerately, the author addresses issues of energy conservation and efficiency maximization, which are significant concerns in the engineering domain. In the designation of any project in conjunction with engineering in international development, efficiency is a crucial factor to consider (Weeks 2012). Besides, Schumacher gives a clear picture in the manner in which engineering in international development relates to environmental conservation and economic development. The book encourages the use of methodologies that conserve the environment rather than pollute it – this is another form of efficiency in the engineering domain. Majorly, the author blames most of the international development flaws on economics. He dilates on the need to make prudent social decisions in the same manner an engineer in international development may need to review his projects and ensure that they mean well to the society before their real implementation.

Conclusion

In one way or another, the author's work relates to engineering aspects for international development in both a narrow and wide perspective. Schumacher is objective in his words, as he tries to give ideas that are for the betterment of the world today and in the future. Engineering for international development domain relate hugely to the author's resonance all throughout his works. *Small is Beautiful* explores numerous and in-depth opportunities for change in social, economic, financial, and most importantly, the scientific realm. The book is recommendable for engineering in international development students as well as students who belong to other careers.

Reference List

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